

East Longmeadow Planning Board

60 Center Square

East Longmeadow, Massachusetts 01028

since 1894

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Michael Carabetta, chair

Alessandro Meccia, vice-chair

Tyde Richards, clerk

George Kingston

Ralph Page

robyn d. macdonald, director

rmacdonald@eastlongmeadowma.gov

Minutes of March 24, 2015

Present were: Chair, Michael Carabetta; Vice Chair, Alessandro Meccia; Clerk, Tyde Richards, George Kingston and Ralph Page.

Waivers Approved

The Apple Place – Cindy Bellerose, 540 Somers Road

Stateline Landscaping, 17 Ruffino Road

ANR – 116 Meadowbrook Road & 30 Mill Road

Applicant, Michael Carabetta recused himself.

The Board reviewed the ANR for 116 Meadow Road and 30 Mill Road owned by Michael Carabetta and Hugh H. Stebbins for the creation of three new parcels, Parcel B containing 43,561 square feet, Parcel C containing 64,295 square feet and parcel D containing 64,560 square feet. The remaining land of Hugh H. Stebbins now contains 115,509 square feet and the new parcels are new portions to existing lots that have the required frontage on Mill Road.

Upon motion duly made by George Kingston and seconded by Ralph Page, the Board voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the ANR for 116 Meadowbrook Road & 30 Mill Road.

Discussion regarding renovation of Town Hall

Mr. Carabetta said that himself, Mr. Page and Mr. Meccia were all in attendance at the DPW meeting the previous night. He said apparently DPW had told Capital Planning that the Planning Board had approved everything and the only thing the Board approved was the waiving on the one parking space for the addition of an elevator not an addition for an elevator. Mr. Carabetta said that there was a lack of communication between the

parties and they tried to get it ironed out and said that DPW wants to go before the town and get the money and then come back to the Planning Board with approvals. He said that Capital Planning is having a tough time understanding why they think they are doing things out of sequence. Mr. Carabetta said as they all know they haven't seen any of the potential renovations and or costs or anything like that. He said that he is not sure what they are going to do at this point as far as moving forward and they wanted to bookmark a spot at the town meeting because they didn't want to lose the opportunity. Mr. Carabetta said he is assuming most of them have looked at feasibility studies and two things that stuck out in his mind is that the building does not have enough office space or enough storage space. He said what the plan is now is to spend roughly about \$800,000.00 not including labor and not address any of those issues. Mr. Carabetta said that the initial feasibility study goes back to the year 2000 and here it is the year 2015 and they have gotten basically nowhere. He said that IT has moved out of the building and in the future the potential of bringing new people to the building such as an HR person and HR Secretary and a Health Agent. Mr. Carabetta said that the building was already at capacity in the year 2000 and he thinks something needs to be done and doesn't think investing time and money into the building is the right thing to do and the studies back that up. He said what he would like to is get everybody on board for a new Town Hall and get the Board's input and if they all agree then he would like to move forward for the next Town Meeting. Mr. Carabetta said that something needs to get done and there are a lot of big ticket items in a not too distant future that will probably prohibit it from ever happening if they don't do it now.

Mr. Richards said that the building is going to become a ternary of bad ideas if they keep putting \$800,000.00 in, three or four years put another \$800,000.00 in, go another three or four years put another \$800,000.00 in and before they know it they are going to have way more invested than what a new building would cost which would be way more efficient from day one. He feels putting more investment into this dinosaur is not a good idea and said it a beautiful building that he would like to see it preserved but at the end of the day it is not a good use for the money.

Mr. Kingston said that he agrees with Mr. Richards but his only question is if the Planning Board is the right Board moving forward. Mr. Carabetta said that he doesn't think that but he is trying to figure out what Board is and nobody is doing anything. Mr. Kingston said he thinks it would be the Board of Selectmen or DPW.

Mr. Richards said why don't they ask the Board of Selectmen if the Planning Board could be the lead agency on the decision. Mr. Carabetta said that his thoughts are first and foremost to see if the Board is in agreement then they could send out letters to all the other Boards informing them what the Planning Board thinks, have meeting with the other Boards, have a public hearing. He said that he talked with town attorney the other day as far as leasing a space and if they over build a new building and they had extra space they could actually lease it out to pay for that building and said that Mr. Page has already done some work on it also. Mr. Carabetta said when you start doing some of the numbers the building literally could pay for itself in 30 to 40 years which is roughly half the life span of a new building. He said that he thinks if they could present it to the tax payers as a win win for everybody and thinks it has merit and thinks it has potential.

Mr. Carabetta said that they have to have all the facts, all of their ducks in a row, have legitimate letters of what everything costs, if it will fit, there will be enough parking and will it handle all of the needs for not only this century but for the next century.

Mr. Kingston said one question that is going to come up immediately is where.

Mr. Carabetta said his personal thought is Heritage Park. Mr. Richards said his thought is a combination of the existing Police Station building with all of the land out back. Mr. Carabetta said the only problem with that is that once you get immediately right behind those buildings there are a lot of issues. He said that the Heritage Park issues are slight and another suggestion was Hamlet Street which is near Van Dyke Road and also the pumping station on Vineland Avenue. Mr. Kingston said that the pumping station wouldn't work because there is a brook running through it. He said that Hamlet Street is conservation area but they could go to the state to get it approved but it has terrible access. Mr. Carabetta said right because it is in a residential neighborhood. Mr. Carabetta said going back to Heritage Park there is already a traffic light there, there is initial parking and if the building is all to the left it doesn't conflict with the pond. He said that they need to have as many facts as they can to present it to the town.

Mr. Page said going to the plan that was submitted he knows that they had brought one in that he looked at very quickly and the first thing that he saw was additional storage along with the elevator. He said that the elevator is ADA compliant but the storage is extra and the square footage of the building would require additional parking. Mr. Carabetta said that he thinks the storage wasn't going to add because they were going to be taking away storage because they are taking away some of the Planning Board Department. Mr. Page said because it was an additional square footage to the building which would need additional parking under the town's by-laws.

Mr. Carabetta said right and if they read the studies that's a basic thing because you can't add square footage to the building because there is no parking. He said not to mention the building in itself cannot handle the structure of a second floor without a lot of infrastructure changes. Mr. Carabetta said that the estimates back in 2000 were 1 to 4 million dollars so those costs probably doubled.

Mr. Richards asked how many square feet in total is needed. Mr. Carabetta said currently there is roughly 14,000 sq. ft. and thinks 25,000 to 30,000 sq. ft. would be better and that would give 10,000 sq. ft. to rent out. Mr. Richards asked Mr. Carabetta what he thinks the building cost would be not including land. Mr. Carabetta said they are figuring \$300.00 a foot. Mr. Richards said then there is going to be a lot of infrastructure in the building. Mr. Carabetta said correct and they are estimating 8 to 10 million dollars. Mr. Richards asked if it can be a profit organization. Mr. Carabetta said no they cannot but they can take money in.

Mr. Carabetta said he is not sure if he wants to recommend anything at town meeting as far as what the DPW is proposing and doesn't feel that it is the right plan at this time.

Mr. Kingston said another location to think about is Center Hill Park where the Little Red School House is.

Mr. Meccia said that he would like to make sure that the Town Hall be maintained and be used.

Mr. Carabetta said that he wants to reach out to all of the other Boards, he doesn't want to leave anyone in the dark and get everyone's input so when they present they have as many questions and answers as they possibly can.

After further discussion the Board agreed that it makes no sense to put any money into the current Town Hall and that it doesn't meet the needs of all the different space studies.

Miscellaneous

Mr. Page asked Mr. Carabetta if he had a chance to talk with Ms. Macdonald about a possible Special Permit, Section 6 finding on Edmund Street. Mr. Carabetta said that he did speak with her and she received the permit request and Attorney Levine wants to present it. He said at the hearing they will address it and according to the by-law Attorney Levine is insisting that it needs a Special Permit so he will present it and they will go through the motions for approval.

With no further business and upon motion duly made by George Kingston and seconded by Ralph Page, the Board voted 5-0 to adjourn at 6:30 p.m.

For the Board,

Tyde Richards, Clerk